The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLIII March 15, 1946 NUMBER 22

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THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924, with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1946 in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. AShland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1934 at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U.S. $5 a year, Canada and Foreign $6. Single copies 10c.

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Houses Out of Tar and Feathers

IT'S VERY simple. In 1938 we had an airplane building industry capable of turning out a couple of thousand planes a year. In May, 1940, President Roosevelt called for producing fifty thousand—and was laughed at. In 1944 we made almost one hundred thousand planes. Was this done by the old methods, with the Government sitting by in an attitude of prayer? Of course not. There was an emergency. Public money was poured in, priorities were established, apprentices were trained at government expense.

In 1946 we have a building industry actually erecting less than a hundred thousand homes. It is big enough, under the most favorable circumstances, to build three hundred thousand homes a year. We need a minimum of a million homes a year, and even then there will be a shortage. This is emergency enough. But this time we are told the existing building industry and building trades can do it, all by themselves. Make thousands of apprentices, quadruple the production of materials, introduce new products—and do all this with the government restricted to prayer.

We are short—desperately short—of homes. Proportionately we are as short as some of the bombed-out nations—we who have never suffered a bomb worse than that carried across the Pacific by a toy balloon. The result? Families lie in railroad waiting rooms. Families park their children in orphan asylums. Thousands mortgage themselves to a desperate limit in order to buy old tenements in which to find shelter. A few tens of thousands (who get there earlier than any bird) put cash on the barrelhead for homes which are, so far, ugly holes in the ground—or even lines on an architect's drafting board. (Architect's drafting board? No; dreams in a builder's head.) And millions live doubled up, with all the devastating troubles which come from living doubled up.

Meanwhile there are steel and stones and brick and mortar and fixtures enough for Best & Co. (New York, N. Y.) to stick up a fancy new store on Fifth Avenue, complete with a gallery for "sidewalk superintendents"—yet right now, and for many years, Best & Co. occupies and has occupied a pretty nice store, also on Fifth Avenue. (Where is the spirit of the Boston Tea Party? New York cops are spread pretty thin these days.)

Meanwhile not a desirable corner in New York (we talk about that of which we know) but bears the legend: "Twenty story office (or apartment) building to be erected."

Meanwhile any bar and grill that wants a face-lifting gets plenty of chrome and hardwood to do the job. Meanwhile . . .

Wilson Wyatt has worked out a program. Perhaps it is not the perfect program. No human being could produce that. But it is a good program—the best yet. For our need is simply houses, houses and lots of houses (dwelling units, if you want to be technical), and houses within the means of the public that wants them. Millions of houses. And profit to be made by building them—not a hundred percent, which is what builders currently ask, but a reasonable ten or twenty or thirty, the last of which, even, is a bit outrageous, you'll agree.

What we want is quantity. So does Mr. Wyatt. Because any roof is better than none to men and women without a roof. Better than a crowded mother-in-law's.

It was to be expected that the real estate boys would, decently and quietly, oppose Wyatt. What do they care? We don't tar and feather respectable business men any more. (Tar, by the way, and feathers—or substitutes for them—are easily procurable; no bottleneck there.) But the brazen insistence—and the sheep-like subservience of congressmen—of these gentlemen on the *status quo* (*they* don't double up) exceeds anything yet seen in the way of crass, short-sighted selfishness.

Priorities? Price limits? Minor subsidies to get the ball rolling? Government apprentice training?—All most un-American! (Like the protective tariff). Long live "free enterprise"—especially where no one is free but the seller. Let them double up! It helps maintain discipline among our unruly youth . . . and it helps the

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market for sales. How we love that 5 percent!

This editorial is inciting to riot. One Senator (privileged) has already been similarly incitive. There being no "clear and present danger," let us have a few riots. Certain Congressmen, the members of the National Association of Real Estate Boards. . . . They tell us that heavy auto oil, crankcase grease, does nicely if you can't get tar. . . . And if you can't get feathers, there are substitutes, some of them made from plastics. . . .

The Washington Sphinx

SECRETARY BYRNES, Senator Vandenberg, Mr. Dulles, General W. Bedell Smith, Mrs. Roosevelt, most every man in the street have been sounding aloud recent and present discontents with American relations to Russia. Except for the *Daily Worker* set and their remarkable supporters, Americans naturally deplore most of what Russia has been doing around the world and what Russians have been doing and saying at home, particularly in the imaginative ritual of confirming their ruling groups in power. By now, in addition, with little less unanimity, Americans have come to deplore what our own government is doing and failing to do about Soviet actions throughout the world.

Secretary of State Byrnes himself leads in strengthening common criticism of the State Department and the whole Government for not being clear or forceful. Secretary Byrnes's attack on himself et al. was somewhat indirect, but not mistakable, and his speech appeared to be a new step and was interesting. It was new and interesting despite the fact that it followed the hoary tradition of propounding vigorously a list of proper principles of action while leaving application vague and for the future. The declared principles are getting closer to a policy. The principles begin to be aimed less at all the stars of the heavens than at the specific red star waving over the Kremlin.

American statesmen, we suppose, take comfort in several considerations when they fail to formulate a foreign policy and act by it. We don't want war! We don't know what the other major powers have as a working policy. The citizenry has no policy; we are confused and irresolute, and so our government should be excused for reflecting so capably our own condition. These supposed conditions, however, which we suppose to be calming consciences and promoting slumbers, do not constitute even a convincing straw man and far less a genuine excuse.

Lack of policy of a great power leads to unsettlement and toward war—not away from war. Experience, the reading of history, and Secretary Byrnes's address on down, attest to the truth of this proposition.

The general citizenry can't be expected to formulate and develop a workable governmental international policy. This is not the rôle of an ordinary private citizen. Correctly, we can't give much more than a general ultimate purpose and desire. Properly, our various representatives, our professionals and experts are supposed to develop a policy and carry it out, and we are here with the ballot to check up and judge and throw the rascals out of jobs if they fail too miserably or displease us too much. It is true that for many reasons American life is relatively somewhat lacking in private and unofficial blocs of informed opinion about the rights and wrongs of national interest and international policy. This condition makes it harder for politicians to find a good foreign policy that can have assured continuing public support, to be sure, but then other conditions in America make other aspects of their job relatively easier, and our politicians shouldn't make too many excuses.

To what extent is the query about Russia's policy a valid excuse for failure of American policy? Very, very little. If our responsible men feel incapable of discovering Soviet policy, correctly they have the alternatives of resigning their responsibilities to men of greater ability or self-confidence, or else of developing a policy that takes into account whatever geniune uncertainties exist about Russian policy. A strong policy should be based on capabilities far more than upon intentions anyway.

At this late date Senator Vandenberg sounds a little deliberately naive when he repeats several times over the old Sphinx cartoons about "What is Russia up to now?" The effort to specify the actual relations between the US and the USSR is an effort for peace, not war. It is an effort prerequisite to the effectuation of an American policy. Sometime somebody in the government might try to make Russia less mysterious rather than more mysterious. From the crude observation point of a newspaper reader, the Soviet policy looks like quite a straightforward proposition from Atlantic to Pacific.

Russia is very, very powerful and bent on becoming still more powerful. Russia has a Stalinist-communist régime which contrasts dramatically with the American régime, and so also the ideology and culture. The Russian Government uses its power very roughly both at home and beyond old Russian borders. If Russia obtained complete control of all the exits to her twin-continental empire, spreading as a commercial, technical and naval force comparable to her status as a land force to the oceans and seas and across to Africa, a third continent, then, when the differential of atom power and other technical and scientific creations ran out, Russia would be powerful beyond human balance. Russia gives almost every

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evidence of trying to control and spread in such wise. Appeasing the Soviet means throwing more people and areas into the communist régime, ideology and culture, and assuring for more people the rough government in which the Soviets specialize. It means building up Russia toward a position of overwhelming and uncheckable power at the mercy of which the US and the rest of the world would quake.

Now most Americans presume that the Russians are reasonable people and not determined upon the ill and misfortune of their own people, their allies and the rest of the world. Therefore, they would accept a clearly defined and realistic limit to this ideal expansion. If we are wrong, and the Russians and Communists are finally and irrevocably committed to such superpower, then anyway, appeasement cannot end too quickly so that the power to enforce appeasement can be checked when it is possible. . . . Unless the United States is not a world power, but a pacifist people willing clearly and positively to embrace a pacifist policy and a pacifist hope for the future.

Fixing Up Congress

A YEAR AGO both houses of Congress appointed a committee to study the weaknesses in our present system of representative government and recommend changes which would serve to alleviate if not to cure those weaknesses. This committee has now made a series of 37 recommendations which Americans interested in their country's welfare would do well to study. In this brief comment it would be impossible to do more than cover one aspect of the suggested reforms, which include a scheme for automatically balancing the budget, increases in congressional salaries, a closer relation between the legislature and the various executive agencies, a more efficient information service for congressmen, and a lot of other things. The point which seems to us of major importance is the reform suggested in the present system of congressional committees. This system is unduly cumbersome and has long called for streamlining. It is now proposed to consolidate the Senate's 33 standing committees into 16 and the House's 48 into 18, and it is further suggested that Congress cease creating special investigating panels. And finally it is suggested that the traditional seniority system whereby congressional committees obtain their chairmen and personnel be abandoned, although no specific substitute is recommended. Anyone who has ever had to deal with our national legislature will testify that the present committee system tends to be obstructive almost automatically, and can be used with devastating effectiveness by deliberate obstructionists. Its simplification would do much to lighten the great burden of work which weighs down a conscientious legislator and might thereby lead to a considerable improvement in the quality of congressional action. Admittedly the seniority system produces some very peculiar results, but the trouble indeed is to find a substitute which will, on the whole, work better. At least seniority has the advantage of making it impossible for special interests regularly to capture the committees they might use.

Strain and Sacrifice

THE NEWSPAPERS call it the "Famine Board," and it is a committee created by President Truman, headed by ex-President Hoover, for the purpose of making it possible for the United States Government to send wheat and fats to three hundred million people in Europe, and to a hundred million people in Japan, China and Russia—people menaced by starvation.

Anyone who followed THE COMMONWEAL through the war years knows how we felt about using famine as an instrument of war.

Anyone who has read us since V-E Day (how quaint the term seems already) knows how we have felt as we watched the food situation abroad grow worse, week after week, month after month, "jeopardizing civilization," and doing so in large measure as the result of our broken promises, our lack of organized purpose.

Now we have a "Famine Board." And perhaps now we will act as we should have acted long ago, for in this country where there is a committee there is hope. The radio will get to work. There is a plan to have the restaurants bring bread to the table only *with* the roast beef, the filet mignon, the lobster, the pork chops and not *before*—the idea being that if it is there while you wait you will eat it, or play with it, at any rate waste it. There will be many other ingenious plans for conservation—all of them voluntary. The best plan the Committee might make would be to ask the Government to send the wheat and the fats where they are needed immediately and let the other plans wait until they are on their way.

Mr. Hoover as much as any man in America has been on the right side of this question from the start. We believe that he will demand and secure accomplishment. We regret, however, two remarks that were made at the first meeting of the committee. One of these he made himself. He said: "We are asking a four months' sacrifice by the American people." The other remark is Secretary Anderson's: "We have to strain ourselves a little more." Since we had more to eat during the war than before the war, and more to eat now than during the war, we hope that prevention of famine in the world will not be entirely dependent on our acceptance of sacrifice, our enduring under strain.

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Hail and So Many Farewells

C. G. Paulding

THEY STEPPED out of the airplane and a camera man said just a minute so that instead of being photographed in motion going somewhere they stood there with their briefcases looking as if they were being photographed in front of a cardboard airplane in a booth at Coney Island. That is why some of them were stiff, some of them waved, but it does not explain why they all were so tweedy, so cheerful, so competent looking, so competently secretarial. They were secretarial because they were members of the Secretariat of the United Nations Organization, in arrested motion before proceeding, released by the camera, to the gymnasium of Hunter College in the Bronx and later perhaps, in spite of an adverse vote of two to one from the inhabitants, to Westchester. They wore tweeds and even those who were not in tweeds looked as if they had recently put them on or presently would do so, because wherever there is an international secretariat for a league of nations or anything like a league of nations there will be a man called Ronnie, a girl called Joan, and even the Frenchman straight from the Ecole Normale, and even the Chinese, will tend to dress like the English because it does not seem to happen the other way round.

They were professionally very cheerful because they have all the telephones to arrange that translate into four languages all at once when a delegate presses a button, they have the seating arrangements to make, and once they have put the delegates in their seats the delegates stay still, and they are the boys and girls who are always moving round the hall quietly bringing a paper for the presiding officer to read, confidentially whispering to Briand, to Stresemann, quietly and confidentially approaching Mr. Byrnes, at precisely the right moment bringing a wanted memorandum to Vishinsky, to Talleyrand, to Bevin.

They were at Locarno as they were at the Congress of Vienna, as they were in Geneva, and here they are getting out of an airplane in New York at La Guardia Field. Welcome.

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But it is impossible not to remember these places the secretaries have left behind them. For entirely technical reasons—because we cannot recall what was in the school books—we can forget everything about the Congress of Vienna except the dancing, but it is not so easy to forget Geneva and it is not immediately possible to see the advantages of the Bronx over Geneva. It is not easy to look at these cheerful secretaries without being aggravated by this quality they have of being happy janitors for any building in any country as long as the people in it are playing about with the idea of maintaining peace.

And then there is a war. The peace people disperse to their several countries in order to become the war people, generally the men who order others to fight the war—each time a more bestial war—and then when the war is over they become again the peace people and they select a new building in which to foregather to talk about maintaining peace, and the cheerful secretaries hasten on ahead—this time it is to New York; last time it was to Geneva—in order to get up early and clean and sweep and put the ash trays on the tables. They have a job; they whistle while they work; when they get excited it is because the Secretary-General M. Avenol makes the mistake of putting peacocks in the gardens in Geneva and even though somebody poisons them it is too late, they have brought bad luck, or it is because Le Corbusier does not win the architects' competition and so the design is not functional. Otherwise they are happy. Now they come here and they are happy.

But we are not particularly happy, because it is as if we were already saying goodbye to them; we have already said goodbye to them before. It is like seeing a guest who keeps returning to a cocktail party, coming out of the elevator again and again; it's all right, it does not really matter; only there is this feeling that it has all happened before.

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We have said goodbye to so many hopes. They keep returning—we keep inviting them back—they are always the same hopes; only, it is essential that they should never be entirely recognizable as the ones that already have been broken. They must always be in new disguise. Otherwise with the best will in the world it would be impossible to continue. The trouble now is that all the dis-

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guises are wearing thin. And also we have become expert about disguises.

These people who have been performing in London and who are now coming to the Bronx have not done enough. The United Nations Organization as a disguise, a garment for the hope called peace, is too much like what that hope wore in Geneva. There is no use parading the figure—we recognize it at once—from continent to continent saying: look what we have got now. It is the same hope which was broken, and they have not done enough for us to mistake it—no matter how hard we may try to do so—for a new one.

When there were fresh hopes in the world they were recognized by those concerned. The Roman slaves knew what Spartacus was talking about; they fought for their hope and they failed. It is not even necessary to write a complete sentence; there are names that stand immediate for a fresh hope recognized, shared and followed until it failed: Joan of Arc, Bob Ingersoll, Danton, Carrie Nation, Lincoln. The intensity, relative importance, the truth, the half truth, the error that these names represent do not matter; they brought a new hope, a new statement; men and women could be and were devoted to them; that is what counts—and it does not matter, either, that the list reads like titles from Haldeman Julius's vulgar catalogue of little books.

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Fifty years ago a young man could leave America for European travel and while studying German, possibly in that city where Americans now are sadly betraying the fundamental concepts of their juridical system, he might read the first foreign translations of Dostoevski, Turgenev, Tolstoi. There he would have found a restatement, sufficiently new, sufficiently fervent to make one of the older hopes of man, one of the most denied, seem possible once more to be held and pursued; the hope that pity and love could influence man's social behavior. Such an American might have come home from his Grand Tour a Socialist. And a hundred years ago, fifty years ago, the immigrant to America might find himself robbed of all he possessed even before he left the dock, he might be sold into the peonage of railroad construction, he might be caught in the sweat shops of the city ghettoes, yet even in that servitude he would have before him the American dream of freedom from fear and want (the American mirage?) and the entire country would be for him a restatement, vivid, impressive, most convincing, of man's oldest hope: that one could eat and, consequently, live without being a slave.

The hope for justice, the hope to keep one's home or to acquire a home, the elemental hopes, constantly they have been denied, and as constantly someone has restated them in a way that made it once more seem possible that they might be achieved. The conservative hopes, the revolutionary hopes have always found someone to restate them—but not now.

The war is over, and this is not the time to talk about the ideology of the war because it never was interesting and it is worn out. It was apparent from the start that the German restatement of their hope to dominate must be rejected, not because it might bring a greatly needed unity to Europe, but because that unity implied the loss of more important spiritual, personal, and even material values. The need to oppose Germany was so obvious that it has become tedious to discuss. From the start it was also obvious that the Germans forced many other nations to restate in blood their simple hope that they could continue to exist and live. These nations fought the war primarily with this limited and precise objective. The Germans must leave Poland, the Germans must leave Belgium, France, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Russia; the Germans must not cross the Channel into England; the Germans, after consolidating Europe, and with whatever allies they might acquire, must not imperil the United States of America.

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Even so clear a scheme of attack and defense could not be carried out without distortion. Even with the victory. The Germans have been driven from wherever they were not wanted. But Poland is not free. Poland still is at war, civil war and foreign war at once, friendless, sequestrated, unvisited, betrayed and forgotten. Incomparably better off than Poland, the other victorious European nations are hardly in a more secure position than that of Italy, Germany's defeated and forgotten ally.

The war had to be fought if ever any war has to be fought. But Europe now is back where we came in (in 1920) with the secretariat supervising the charwomen, the carpenters—probably Jo Mielziner for a backdrop with a dove on it—arranging the protocol, placing name cards (is Russia next to Rumania or next to the U.S.), polishing ash trays. Yet there is this difference. After the last war the allies punished Germany but they had a plan—which, of course, did not work. After this war the United Nations are punishing Germany but they have no plan whatever; they are punishing Germany while pretending that Germany does not exist or can be made no longer to exist. Through this procedure they are, in fact, assuming that Europe does not exist or may cease to exist. For the question is no longer the German question; it is the European question; so long as there is no plan for a pro-

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ductive Germany integrated in Europe there is no plan for Europe.

There is this difference also between 1920 and 1946. After the last war certain sovereign states were created following the theory of self-determination. After this war the sovereignty of certain states was destroyed following the theory that promises made in wartime are never kept. This is not the place to argue about the blessings of total, unrestricted national sovereignty. But it is entirely impossible not to protest against unilateral destruction of sovereignty and even more against so hypocritical a restoration of sovereignty (Poland's) as to place a country in the continued possession of Russian armies and Russian police or anybody else's armies and police. Until the nations of Europe are united in a voluntary federation they must be free.

There is no plan for such federation; there is no plan for such freedom; no plan for Germany, for Italy, for Poland, for Europe; there is not the faintest suggestion of a plan for the rest of the world. There is the United Nations Organization in the gymnasium of Hunter College in the Bronx. It presents, insufficiently changed, the hope presented by its predecessor in Geneva. We recognize that hope for a broken hope.

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The Communists have a plan for Germany, for Europe, for the world. It was a wonderful plan when Lenin was making it in a Geneva café; it still was wonderful when he took it back to his country, because it was a fresh new hope, a fresh restatement of an ancient hope for a society in which there would not be the very rich and the very poor. It seemed as if the long patient socialist effort, the intellectual effort and the organizing effort, the work of all the political exiles and the work of French and German doctrinaires, had found a new and precise technique, a way to realization. We did not have the word totalitarian then, or if we did, it did not frighten us. The word socialist had frightened us enough but it did not frighten us any more, and if communism looked—already—totalitarian we were not frightened because there had been a very long war and if there was any way to abolish frontiers, nationalism, and hatreds we did not look too closely for faults in a doctrine which proposed to abolish them. It was still a wonderful plan when Lenin got to Russia with it and when it seemed that all the Russian people believed and hoped in it. We thought that those who did not believe and hope in it were reactionaries; we thought Kerensky timid.

The plan ceased to be wonderful when we saw that coercion was necessary to carry it out. When we saw that it would not work of itself through persuasion and consent, but that it had to have its own police, and was a dictatorship not of the masses over the few but of the few over the masses, we no longer thought it wonderful. We knew that it was tyranny. That hope also became a broken hope.

The Russian plan for Germany is to strip Germany of everything that can be moved; the Russian plan for Europe is to keep Europe weak if opposed to Russia, strong if dominated by Russia; the Russian plan for the world can be discussed by anyone who is interested in historical imperialism, world politics, heartlands, life lines, air bases and the possession, or not, of atom bombs. Our interest in Russia is interest in communism—once a fresh hope and now a broken hope. We are not concerned with predicting another war or with predicting who can win another war. Communism, having become a political instrument at the service of a world power, is a factor in power politics and no longer of theoretical or emotional interest.

No. That last sentence cannot stand. It seems all right but it cannot be left standing because there is evidence against it; that evidence must be heard. In France and elsewhere it seems certain that the communist attraction still exists emotionally and theoretically. Young men still are becoming communists; they are still adhering with all their will and devotion to the will of the party; they are still religious about it. And there is no use saying that they are deceived by the nationalist face communism actually presents. They are too intelligent. It would seem rather that, faced with the necessity of choosing between the Western world and Russia they are choosing a revolutionary plan rather than the Western world's absence of plan. So the sentence should read: communism is an instrument at the service of a world power and is of interest emotionally and theoretically only to men who are willing to place their countries in the system controlled by that power and to whom any revolution is better than none.

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There was this Frenchman who came up from Venezuela and he talked in the Palace d'Orient Armenian restaurant in New York about the recent revolution they have had in Venezuela. Which is Venezuela, I said. It does not matter, he said. The socialists made the revolution against the conservatives and the communists—the socialists and a part of the army, the part that is young and wants to be a colonel. At the last moment it looked as if the revolution might not work and so the socialists called on the people to rise. They had machine guns and rifles packed in grease that had come from Belgium before the war and so they gave these out to the people. The people did not rise. Nor did they vote, because you have to

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be literate to vote in Venezuela and the people cannot read or write. So that there has been a revolution but the people have had nothing to do with it.

Yet it is the people all over the world who want the revolution; they want the revolution that will leave them alone with their hopes. They want the revolution that will stop the building of atom bombs, the revolution that will instruct the police all over the world to limit their interest to false checks and murders; they want the revolution that will attack disease. They want a world revolution so that they may be at home anywhere in the world, oppressed only by the dismay that they must die, fearful only of the loneliness that no human love can avert, anxious only about their mysterious destiny.

These are the hopes they have always had; they seem less likely to be fulfilled than at any time before.

Boston's Political Morals

How account for public misfeasance coupled with private goodness?

Katherine Loughlin

UPON WHAT meat do these our Caesars feed that they have grown so great? What of James Michael Curley, former Mayor of Boston, former Governor of Massachusetts, present Mayor, and recently convicted of use of the mails to defraud? Whether his sentence is excessive for the degree of guilt in this single set of circumstances is not important. What is important to a mystified country is that his long career has been possible only through the support of large numbers of God-fearing, good-living Catholics.

They flocked to his inaugural recently, they have been joyous at all his inductions into office, they greeted him with swarming affection and loyalty even on his return from Washington after the court had found him guilty of the charges. Do they approve of criminal acts, of low standards in public office? Is it a case of loving the hand that feeds them from the public treasury? No. It is not so simple as that. Curley could not have bought with favors the many thousands that have supported and still support him through thick and thin. It is a case of admiration for a man who, in many ways, has deserved admiration and who is now suffering tragedy.

Most of the people who have supported him will admit that he has done wrong things, will even say that he has not been strictly honest regarding contracts and other matters having to do with public funds. Boston Curleyites know as well as the rest of the world that his public career was interrupted at its start by a term in jail; for doing something, by the way, which he has never admitted — or perhaps perceived — was wrong. They have never rejected this adored leader, a practicing Catholic, a faithful husband, a loving father, a courteous and cultivated man whose public career has begun and ended with court sentences.

The reasons for this paradox are important to Catholics, not only in Boston, but everywhere else. Catholics believe that the answer to the troubles of the world both in international relations and in private morals lies in Christian and Catholic morality. Will that morality work as it is working in Boston, which is one of the most Catholic cities in the world—and Catholic not in name only? It is a city in which good Catholics have constituted a majority of the population for three-quarters of a century—not nominal Catholics as is the case in some older countries.

All this cannot be dismissed as a racial problem, with the implication that there is nothing to be done about the upcropping of typical racial defects on a large scale wherever a given race predominates. Are the Catholic clergy and laity accessories to lax morality in government? Should the Boston hierarchy have corrected the political chaos before it got so bad? No, the clergy have not been like Pontius Pilate in washing their hands of it. They have been right in their abstention from continuous interference in politics.

They have been unconsciously remiss, however, in another way; preventing improvements that have long been possible. The fact is that the Boston Catholic laity are in leading strings to the clergy and are impotent. In an excess of goodness, docility, almost infantilism, they respond to every dictum of the clergy as to their individual lives and their homes and the support of every authorized ecclesiastical activity. But they have no leaders, no official voice, no public opinion as a group, no forum for frank discussion. The laity have not been encouraged or even allowed to develop lay leadership and an informed public

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opinion in the field that belongs to the laity. They have been denied the opportunity to coalesce into groups that could form and express opinions based on lay experiences and sense of responsibility.

It is a long time since we have had a lay Catholic press. We have instead a paper run by priests, written by priests, an extension of the pulpit, a sounding-board for priestly opinion for the purpose of direction by priests and publicity on clerical points of view and ecclesiastical news. A good paper, too, no longer the diocesan fly-swatter. But not all we need. Oh, for the days of John Boyle O'Reilly, of Stephen O'Meara, and of the good Mayor Collins!

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Let no one suppose that it is my intention to blame the clergy exclusively for our political misfortunes and for Boston's sorry state. Boston, like many large cities, is ailing from a multiplicity of causes. Our clergy are as little to blame individually as the individual Catholic layman. Many Catholics, both lay and clerical, saw disaster approaching as much as thirty years ago. The blame is on Catholics as a group, however, for a lack of social conscience. Our laity are for the most part dutiful descendants of Irish Catholics who a little more than a hundred years ago counted themselves blessed to have a priest at all for Mass and the sacraments. They were too grateful to have priests here to pick flaws even when their pastors were only too obviously human in defects of judgment or, as rarely happened, when they failed to set a good example. It is in the Irish psychology that, as the old people used to say, "It is bad luck to criticize a priest." They have not been disposed to protest, "See here, the laity is important, too. They do not exist to serve the purposes of the clergy. If there must be a choice, it is better the other way around. God is served in one sphere as well as in another."

No, we Catholics of Boston have never been so brash. We should have had to come out in open rebellion. We endured uncomplainingly the usual minor tyrannies of the clergy in matters of art, architecture, entertainments, organization and procedure. It was an easy step to a condition in which the only large diocesan group of men was disbanded for refusing to accede as voters to a command from the Archbishop's house; in which a group of some forty Catholic delegates from various parts of the country to a national alumnae meeting were ordered to leave the convent where they were staying, with two hundred local guests, within an hour, and their programs canceled, because they had the temerity to prefer their own slate of officers; in which at a business meeting of a Catholic group its constitution was publicly destroyed as a "piece of paper" to show that its only function was obedience to its spiritual and clerical director.

This past history would not be worth bringing up except that it is pertinent to the explanation of Mr. Curley. It shows in part how it is that Boston Catholicism has known how to produce devoted priests and devoted people—but not devoted citizens. Of course we have hundreds of men in public life whose official acts are blameless. But we have had no machinery for the spread of their ideals, for the expression of disapproval of lower standards or to demand removal of those who only know how "to play the game" in the old way. These gay buccaneers have met with tacit approval only because there existed no means of correction.

The usual reason given in Boston for acceptance of undesirable candidates for public office is the cost of campaigns. A hundred thousand dollars more or less must be spent to run for Mayor, on rallies, billboards, radio, and other publicity. Because this means that every candidate must be indebted to "interests" he has undertaken to pay off in one way or another when he is in office, there is some excuse for selecting among "practical politicians" the candidate you like, even though he is more or less obviously dishonest. In the case of Curley, some defensive loyalty has been aroused by hypocritical attacks from the "interests" who could make better use of more pliant tools.

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If a Catholic lay group representing the largest element in the population made a job, a year-round effort if necessary, of sifting acceptable candidates and of preparing a slate of honest, qualified men which could be publicized well in advance of elections, the pre-election expense could be pared down to reasonable limits. It would be truly cynical to suppose that, under aggressive leadership, we could not have hundreds of men to do this work with integrity and intelligence, making the slate one that could be supported with confidence. Such a Catholic assumption of responsibility, even if it is conceivable that the candidates might sometimes fail of election, would remove the onus of Catholic consent to discreditable representation. It is the kind of work that only the laity can do.

The time has arrived, has long been here when lay discussion of our plight is called for. Not because of deliberate failure on the part of the clergy, of course. It is a happy thing that the criticism can be made when we have a great priest in charge of our diocese, one so selfless that it is hard for any Catholic to refuse him all he asks, or to point out any unconscious lack. Another fortunate thing for the critic is that the Archship is too new in his position to be blamed for conditions that antedate his appointment, that

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have in fact been growing since his boyhood. Priests brought up in such a clergy-dominated society naturally think that all is well, and that by continuing in the same tradition with goodness taught as to home and church, goodness will somehow spread to business and public life. To some extent of course it does.

There is this disadvantage to clerical dominance, apart from the failure of the laity to learn and perform their part, that a priest has to be more circumspect in what he can say in public. His influence in non-sectarian activities is limited by the fact that he represents a special interest and to a great extent is not speaking for himself. He cannot speak out as can a layman, without waiting for next year's judgment on the basis of more facts or experience. The layman can state his opinon now, for what it is worth combined with other opinions, hoping that interaction will bring speaker and audience, reader and writer, nearer to truth and its application. A priest, for instance, could not write as I am writing now, for better or for worse.

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We have the most wonderful Catholic women in Boston, intelligent, efficient, deft socially, but they meet Mr. Curley at railroad stations to express their loyalty and comfort. Yes, wonderful potentially, but at present not generally perceptive nor responsible in public matters. They belong to a plethora of Catholic organizations, most of them to numbers of overlapping groups, in which their spiritual directors tell them what subjects to think on as well as what to think. They have no practice, if they stick to Catholic circles, in thinking or acting for themselves. Politics are outside the chaplains' fields, and so outside that of the women. It is not so bad, perhaps, in the men's groups, where laymen are often heard. We have just now a great resurgence of Holy Name Societies.

But who has not seen at public meetings of Catholic societies the woman president set aside almost physically, like the puppet that she is, after she has been allowed to say a few words, and the rostrum taken over with a bland arrogance that is partly clerical and partly just masculine by the real head of the society who thus demonstrates that he is the one who has authority to speak for the group? No one would want to deprive such groups of the kindly and helpful suggestions of priests as members or duly elected officers.

If they have not been duly elected, however, in lay groups, they usually don't belong in the chairman's position, any more for instance than they should take over the chair at a meeting of realtors or wholesale druggists. It doesn't matter that the priest's address may be more or less interesting to the audience than the president's would have been.

Our Catholic women continue to be admirable in their homes and in support of every ecclesiastical project. Like Mr. Curley they have been what they have been required to be; their chief duty, it seems, beyond Hitler's three k's, being to raise money for charities and other church needs. Years ago a group of them felt that some stand ought to be taken in disapproval of political figures and activities labeled Catholic, so a sizable meeting was arranged with a speaker as the opening gun in a program of study and possible group action. Priests were in attendance, of course, and when one of them was questioned, he put a damper on the plan. In his opinion it was not desirable, he said, for the women to interest themselves in public affairs. It would be better to stay at home and take care of their families. That they could do both, as the Pope is now advising Italian women, was beyond his ken. The plan died away in an innocuous civics course in which no Boston problems or personalities were ever mentioned.

So we have a state of docility and lack of responsibility in the shepherded flocks of Boston women. No one has ever encouraged them as Catholics to feel responsibility for the finances or administration of the city in which they have so much power. The efficiency or honesty of its officials does not seem related to their moral duty.

Catholics believing in free will and the guidance of the Holy Spirit cannot say we are helpless, that we have no choice but to have such as Mr. Curley for our leaders, any more than they could have said the same in New York of Jimmy Walker. Both were tolerated under a low standard of public morality, a myopia shared by large portions of laity and clergy. When the saintly Archbishop of New York threw his arms about Jimmy Walker in affectionate embrace, no wonder Protestants were shocked and baffled. They concluded logically that Catholics did not demand the same kind of integrity for good standing in their religious and social circles.

The Catholic concept of public duty is too low elsewhere than in Boston and New York, though where Catholics are less segregated this is less likely to be the case. Duty to our fellow-citizens of all faiths has had slight emphasis in the training of priests or people. There has been an implication that keeping the negative laws of the Church was enough. For just such limited conscience the Church has suffered and is still to suffer in other countries. Can the Church here see beyond its own immediate plans in missions, in education, in charities, in time to avoid the inevitable sanction? Does it see that we do not need expansion, more edifices, more activity on the familiar lines, so much as more responsibility

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for our fellow-man? Rather than the alleged corruption of the Church in Spain, Italy and Mexico, was it not just such blindness that set holiness and devotion to the Church alongside indifference to unjust conditions for the masses of the people?

Of course in these cases, the Church only seems to say we are not our brothers' keepers. It could never make such an error. Is it not possible, though, for the Church, made up of individuals leading noble, sacrificial lives, to act selfishly as a civic group, to be self-seeking in relation to other groups? I remember a leader of a non-Catholic committee interested in needed reform being asked as to possible Boston Catholic support. "We can expect no help," she said, "but just let us seem to threaten any distinctively Catholic principle or interest and the Cardinal's cohorts will rally at the State House by morning."

The narrowly Catholic view is often not the only factor to be considered in a situation. It is loyalty of that kind which called for blind support of a dictator like Franco because he had been against enemies of religion, apart from whether he was a just ruler. A blind and narrow religiosity sees no duties or loyalties except to ecclesiastical interests. Is the Catholic doctrine of sacrifice applicable to individuals only, or is it perhaps applicable at times to certain clerical ambitions?

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Needless to say, it was not the duty of the clergy to correct economic injustice, bad distribution of wealth and education in Spain and Mexico. Their error, as far as they were to blame at all, might have lain in dominating the laity and teaching them by implication that their Catholic duties were discharged by church attendance, reception of the sacraments, and a good family life. Perhaps they failed to see and point out duties with only indirect connection with or benefit to the Church—duties to Catholic and non-Catholic fellow-men in their communities.

When the Pope cries, "Give me leaders!" he means lay as well as clerical. But lay leaders are not to be looked for in a regimented society where every Catholic association is ruled over and lectured to by a priest and of which the constitution, officers and program are subject to the approval of a priestly prefect.

Without these monitors, we might learn to use our own mental and moral muscles. It would not be such smooth sailing for a while, perhaps, nor superficially so successful. But lay responsibility and lay application of Catholic doctrine in fields not proper to priests are too much needed by the rest of the world as well as by Boston not to make it worth a little trouble to foster them.

So good-bye, Mr. Curley. We have had your last campaign. You have been a generous man, truly kind to the needy, the sick, and the sorrowful, faithful to family and religious duties, the father of four sons in the service of the country, as well as of a Jesuit whose prayers may bring you blessings and solace. You have been our chosen political leader because you convinced us long ago of your executive brilliance and because we didn't know how to replace you with men of less charm and perhaps with less ability, but with sounder techniques in public finance and administration.

We have never made strong demands, Mr. Curley, never asked effectively for anything but what you gave us. We registered our approval again and again at the polls, so that now when you are penalized partly because of a bad reputation, we cannot fairly dissociate ourselves from you and your disgrace.

Like the fallen heroine of melodrama, you have been sinned against as well as sinning. We made you what you are today. We have loved you and still do for your eloquence, for your sweetness of character, and for your zeal for Boston, too. We know in our hearts that we asked you by implication to be strictly upright only in your home and in respect to religious duties. So we don't feel that forgiveness is called for from us. Instead we ask you to forgive us for not helping you to more effective use of great endowments. Forgive us if you can. And thank you for being a sign and a warning that may deter us from support of far worse men to lead us in public affairs.

There is mourning for your punishment in Boston, and conviction that it is disproportionate to your guilt. We are suffering with you. And with you are hoping for better days.

Poems on Postcards

Overstate of the Union

The state of the union is this, chiefly:
No one since Lincoln says things briefly.

It would help our politicoes quite a bit
To learn how to cut, and what to omit.

And if some were kept incommunicado
The United States would be El Dorado.

"My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is"

My mind to me a soviet is,
  Such Frame of Reference I find
That I won't answer any quiz
  Until the dope is party-lined:
Then hitch my droshky to a Star
  And follow the U.S.S.R.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

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Dachau, Prison-House for Priests

Clerical life in a concentration camp

L. de Coninck

IN DECEMBER, 1941, I was sentenced to six months in prison by the Brussels Regional Court for having given, in clergy retreats, lectures to priests which included an over-all picture of nazism: the reasons why it attracted so many people, the basic incompatibility of its teachings with those of the Gospel and the best ways in which to combat it. In May, 1942, without any additional court action, I was deported into Germany to a concentration camp. The nazi gentry were convinced, they informed me, that I was the soul of resistance on the part of the clergy. It was a most exaggerated judgment, but I refused neither the honor they bestowed upon me nor the results which they felt should follow. I left for Dachau, where I was to spend three years, three years of experiences which for nothing in this world would I have missed.

When I arrived at Dachau on June 18, 1942, I found some 2,500 priests incarcerated there. When I left on May 13, 1945, there remained 1,100. Some 60 Germans had been released during the course of the last weeks; the remaining 1,300 all died at the camp, and did not die from natural causes.

Every nation was represented among these men. Toward the end the French numbered 123, as I recall. The next largest group were some 80 Czechs. There were 33 of us Belgians. But the largest group of all always consisted of Poles. I arrived in time to make the acquaintance and to venerate the saintly Auxiliary Bishop of Woztslavek, the Most Reverend Bishop Kozal, who died of exhaustion in December, 1942. These members of the clergy indeed represented all Europe. They emanated from 138 dioceses and, I believe, 25 religious orders. (A priest from Metz kept the records of our cell block with painstaking care. They were deposited in the presbytery of the village of Dachau.) The Society of Jesus contributed a large contingent—almost 100, whereof 63 were still alive when the day of liberation came. They came from 13 different provinces: Holland, the two German provinces, the two Polish provinces and the province of the Oriental Rite, the Czech and Austrian provinces, the four French provinces, and the Belgian. All of the Church's hierarchy was represented, from a bishop (of Clermont-Ferrand) down to students in preparatory seminaries. And in the camps were members of all the Christian groups: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Old Catholic and Mariavite.

Early in 1941 all priests were being transferred to and concentrated in the Dachau camp, and they were sheltered in three prison blocks, block 26, first reserved for Germans (later all non-Poles were moved to this block), and blocks 28 and 30. This gathering together into a single area was, in accordance with an agreement with the Holy See, accompanied by various "privileges": opportunities for holding religious services, exemption from heavy labor and employment in war industry, a life in an ecclesiastical community, and various dietary improvements paid for by the German hierarchy. The latter in fact amounted only to an excuse for bullying on the part of the SS. For instance, each of us daily received a glass of wine which must be drunk at the command of the SS and returned—empty or full—at its command! This was really no more than an excuse to elaborate on the calumnies charged against the clergy—those gluttonous and lazy fellows. And what is more, these privileges were very soon reduced to living in common, the use of the chapel, and freedom from transfer to other camps.

The three prison blocks were later cut down to two, and during the last months to a single one. By then we were living under incredibly crowded conditions. My dormitory, which contained about 144 square yards of floor space, housed 350 men. During the interval when churchmen were dispensed from heavy work, they were exploited in every possible way. In winter the frightful task of clearing the camp of snow was imposed upon them. All day long we were outside shoveling, piling snow upon overturned dining tables, upon long wheel barrows, which then had to be taken to the river running along the edge of the camp and there dumped. This work, in itself hard and exhausting, was made worse by the fact that it was supervised by "capos," those poor degenerate brutes, worse than the SS, and the cause of how many innocent deaths!

Twice a day we had to journey to the kitchens in order to distribute the heavy containers of

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food throughout the camp. Each container weighed 150 pounds and into it were poured 150 pounds of "soup." Then, two of us to a container, shod in light sandals almost impossible to keep on our feet, had to carry the food to each of the cell blocks in the camp. Hardly ever was the task accomplished without someone's stumbling, amid howls of glee from the onlookers who seemed all to be moved by a sort of animal hatred for the "Pfaffen." When this happened, our own cell block had to replace the contents of the spilled container with one of the containers intended for our use.

In short order the exemption from work was dropped and the greater part of the priests were assigned to teams which labored on what was called the "plantation." This consisted in the raising of medicinal herbs and luxury flowers, a business belonging to certain Party bigwigs, who, it was said, through good times and bad made therefrom a net annual profit of 750,000 marks. The number of those who died as a result of these labors was frightening. The majority of the priests who quit this world in the concentration camp sacrificed their lives to this business. Worn out by tramping back and forth from work, half-starved, they had to work at their tasks like slaves, from earliest dawn to evening, and in all weathers. If they came back to their quarters wet and muddy, there was no opportunity afforded them to dry out their flimsy work clothes; next day they had to put them on as wet as they had been the night before. And here again the work, hard enough in itself, was made even more inhuman by the "capos" and "sub-capos" and by the SS guards with their snarling dogs.

Yet in the long run our way of life became less difficult and priests were likewise given less difficult tasks to perform. Thus it happened that about a hundred of them were put in the "Besoldung," which might be described as the bookkeeping department of the SS. Working there, conditions were more humane because the SS members there employed were, in large measure, what might be called slackers. Almost all of them had a certain amount of education and seemed to belong to the liberal professions. Their attitude was in strong contrast to the unbelievable vulgarity and cruelty of the ordinary SS species. Some 30 of us priests were also attached to the infirmary, either as charge nurses, in which capacity we actually served as doctors, or as clerks in the pesthouse office.

But unfortunately this happy situation did not last. One day the authorities discovered a heavily documented report prepared by one of us on the entire history of Dachau. At once there followed a fine outburst of repressive measures. The result was that we were removed from all positions where we might inform ourselves on what went on in the camp. . . . But little by little we regained the ground we had lost.

And thus it came to pass that at the end we alone — or almost alone — constituted the employees of the "Hall of Records." This made it possible for us to officiate at the reception of newcomers, of those frightening columns which arrived during the last months from the various camps evacuated to Dachau. The unhappy victims of these death marches at least were greeted by friendly faces. And it was thus that I myself had the joy of comforting those founders of the Young Christian Workers (JOC), Fernand Tonnet and Paul Garcet.

It was not toil alone which brought so many priests to their untimely ends. We had also to reckon with the constant ill-treatment visited upon us by the camp's executioners. Before Dachau I had never seen hatred: eyes flaming with ill-will, mouths twisted with anger at the sight of a "Pfaffe." To strike, to wound, to kill a priest seemed an instinctive need among some of these creatures.

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But alongside all these horrors there were also great and splendid things. And these, more than the former, deserve to be remembered.

In cell block 26 we had a chapel. Only the inmates of this building could make use of it, since by the will of the SS access to it was strictly forbidden to everyone else. But little by little courage increased as did the desire to break this tyrannical "verboten," so that at the end anyone who had a mind to came to the chapel.

This chapel was merely a dwelling unit in which the partition separating the dormitory from the refectory had been torn down. It had been granted as a concession either in January, 1941, or in December, 1941. The altar consisted of a small table, less than a square yard in area. Its entire appurtenances consisted in a traveling Mass kit. And we must remember that its use had to be shared among all Christians. This was always worked out with great charity on the part of all.

Gradually our sanctuary was embellished, with or without the consent of those in charge of the camp. Thus in the end the altar was very worthy, and entirely the fruit of ingenious toil on the part of the prisoners. I might make special allusion to the tabernacle, wrought—obviously against the rules—in the cabinet shop provided for the camp's luxury furniture. It was adorned with decorations at first fashioned out of tin yielded by food cans, and then out of bronze "liberated" from the enemy. The crucifix on the main altar was a naive piece of sculpture whittled out by a prisoner. Later it was turned into a processional cross when there arrived from Muenster a magnificent work of art presented to us by the men

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of Catholic Action. The candlesticks were also a home product, in very good taste. For the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament—we even occasionally held perpetual adoration—we had two ostensoria at our disposal: one, severely and symbolically plain, was an ebony cross with a lunula in the form of a sun with rays made out of tin cans; the other was fabricated out of light lemon wood. . . .

We were also sent a handsome statue of the Virgin, which the future will see become a center of pilgrimage to Dachau in the Basilica of Reparation. This basilica is to be erected on tthe site of the Administration Building, which has been handed over for this purpose by the American authorities. The statue of Our Lady was an object of continuous devotion: thousands of souls sought comfort at her feet. . . .

Our chapel walls were soon adorned with Stations of the Cross and a bas-relief and neatly framed prints gave evidence of devotion to the Sacred Heart and Saint Joseph. On the Epistle side a small table served as sacristy. Gradually its equipment improved, until it included really handsome vestments, evidence of the sympathy of the faithful for their persecuted priests. These made possible the celebration of solemn offices. At Easter, 1944, we actually had four large Pascal candles at our disposal. Hosts and wine were supplied us in quantity through the good offices of the parish priest of Dachau, with whom, on the 25th of each month, we were allowed to communicate regarding our needs for religious services. What is more, the equipment of the chapel included about a hundred breviaries in four volumes, supplied by the Diocesan Curia of Breslau. They proved serviceable above all during 1944, when idleness was general and allowed us to pay more attention to priestly activities. In 1945 our cell block was so over-crowded (1,100 occupants) that the recitation of the Office became the privilege of a fortunate few.

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In our chapel religious observances made a progress similar to that of the physical betterment of the sanctuary itself. At the outset we had only shortened low Masses—begun directly at the Offertory and ending with the Communion. From these beginnings we achieved full pontifical ceremonies after we had been supplied with a bishop and a Benedictine abbot! The history of the liturgy at Dachau would make a chapter all by itself—a very special chapter which I shall not attempt to write. As we all know, knowledge of the liturgy—and I mean knowledge of the rules governing the liturgy—has still some slight progress to make among our clergy. So I shall rest content with describing the life in our prison chapel.

Every day Mass was celebrated before most of the camp was awake; Communion was distributed by four persons, who passed about through the community. In the beginning it was always the same priest who celebrated—such were the orders of the "Lagerführung." Why? Anyone who has ever lived under the nazi régime knows that there is no need to seek any deep reason for petty annoyances: there wasn't any. Starting with Christmas, 1942, our circumstances improved. For special reasons the perpetual celebrant might be replaced by another. And thus it happened that I was called upon to say the requiem for Father Ledochowski. Shortly thereafter a rotation system was set up and two Masses were celebrated on Sunday. Finally the number of Masses was multiplied until we reached a point where Mass was being said practically continuously, morning and evening.

On Sundays we had a High Mass and Solemn Vespers. A sermon was preached before the morning Office, at first always in German. I broke the spell of this language in favor of Latin, which was certainly better fitted to so international a group. As time went on we arranged services in which the various nationals could have the comfort of living again in terms of their own tongues. . . . Lay people attended all these services in large numbers. Typhus, which broke out in 1945, had the effect of putting a stop to draconian discipline, and it was never resumed. At the same time lack of work became the rule.

From thenceforward we had all the leisure we wanted to plan and execute very elaborate services. The musicians among us, and several of them were eminent, even had time to compose. And so there was born a "Missa Dachauensis." I do hope that, to the greater advantage of sacred art, this polyphonic Mass will be published, a Mass in which the people themselves in the church sing their part as though it were written in Gregorian. I can assure you that the effect was magnificent. And so all the liturgical ceremonies were thenceforth carried out in great splendor: Christmas, Holy Week, Corpus Christi. This splendor reached its high point in pontifical ceremonies: we had two mitres and croziers, pectoral crosses, rings, violet cape and cassock, bishops' tunicles . . . nothing was lacking. And all of these things had been made at the camp itself; materials for them were most ingeniously "organized." Not for nothing had we all learned the meaning of a "compensatio occulta."

On our third Christmas we arranged for a service of praise by all the nations in honor of the King born in a stable. Each national group was invited to sing its ancient carols in such sequence that the whole of the Mystery was set forth. I linked the various songs together by means of brief introductions, and thus they be-

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came the natural expression of the feelings of the whole group. Everyone left this service determined to institute something of the same kind when he got home to his own parish. But what was really the culmination of all our efforts of this sort was the ordination of a deacon from Muenster who had been incarcerated for five years. The ceremony was performed in accordance with all canonical requirements, but was a triumph of secretiveness. That Gaudete Sunday of 1944 will long remain in memory. Perhaps it was the most impressive ordination ever to have taken place: here we were in prison, with hundreds of priests placing their hands upon another man "bound to Christ." And to round out the story I must add that Protestant minister came in great numbers and insisted on preparing a noonday feast for the new priest which constituted an extraordinary exception to the less than simple diet we normally enjoyed.

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When first I arrived at Dachau I was included in a group of four or five hundred fated for the gas chambers. Thanks to a series of circumstances in which the protection of the Virgin was obvious, I was able to avoid being put to death. But for two frightful months I shared the life of those about to die. Since I was newly arrived, I was just about the only one in vigorous health. Hence I felt an obligation to do what I could to comfort the others. I fairly quickly succeeded in obtaining some consecrated Hosts which I broke up into tiny particles—20 to each Host—and wrapped in cigarette papers. Thanks to this method of reservation, with the Sacrament on my person day and night, I was able to dispense this source of help and strength and also on many occasions to give the Viaticum to those on the way to execution.

I likewise organized a secret eight-day retreat in Latin, with three exerciseese held every day. Daily we had Benediction. My spectacle case served as ciborium and my knee as the thabor upon which I balanced our Treasure. Later on in the infirmary I was able to arrange another retreat for sick priests. Those able to move about came and sat upon the bed of my dear Polish colleague Grabowski and then each returned to his dormitory and repeated the religious instructions to those who were bedridden.

In our own cell block as early as January, 1943, I organized a series of lectures given in one of the dormitories at eight o'clock in the morning. The results were sometimes amusing since very sudden changes of subject became necessary whenever the "enemy" intruded, thanks to the lack of vigilance of the watch we had posted.

A final word or two upon what we were able to do for the laity in the camp. During the last year there was a great deal more freedom and we were able to undertake things which would have been out of the question earlier. A most interesting study could be made on the religious attitude of the prisoners. Those who have never been in a concentration camp sometimes hold idyllic, romantic and thoroughly false views on this subject. It is so easy to imagine that these thousands of men, deprived of all human help and constantly under the threat of death, would impetuously seek God, that priests need only present themselves and say a word or two for the faithful to fall on their knees like ripe fruit from a shaken tree. A great deal would have to be said about conversions "in quacumque necessitate." . . .

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Yet much good was done. Above all we were able to establish contact between people belonging to very disparate and very hostile groups, who thus learned to respect each other. That was a great deal. A Protestant minister told me that he was most happy to have been able to live in contact with Catholic priests. With his own eyes he had seen how false were many of the things imputed to them. There were a certain number of conversions. But I firmly believe that the most fruitful of all were the numerous, intimate and enlightening contacts. Many strangers to the Church learned to know her through their priest comrades, and through the joyfully radiant and devoted lives of these comrades, far more than they would have done through controversy.

We had an organized system for distributing Communion, in which we had to have recourse to lay deacons, to modern Tarsiciuses who gladly fulfilled their office. And above all we were able to carry out a wonderful apostolate among the sick during the 1945 epidemic. An appeal was made to priestly devotion. The response more than met the need, and there were constantly priests locked up with the unfortunate victims of typhus. A few of them died as a result of their charity. But their stay in the infected cell blocks was a real Pentecost. Not a single Catholic, practically, refused to accept the Sacraments; quite on the contrary, they called for them and died with true saintliness.

Many other things could be said regarding the lives of priests in this prison house, but what I have here recounted suffices to outline the general nature of that life. God permitted hundreds of priests to be in chains and hundreds of them to die. But neither their death nor their imprisonment constituted annihilation. It was a sacrifice which, by virtue of the Divine Sacrifice, was redemptive and sanctifying. To this episode in history may likewise be applied the words of the Psalmist: "He who sows in tears shall reap in exaltation."

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The Stage

To the Messrs. Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan:

IN REFERENCE to your three-column advertisement, "To the Theater Going Public," run in the New York *Times* for March 1 and outlining your reasons, as producers, for closing Maxwell Anderson's play, "Truckline Café," within the week, it will appear, I imagine, somewhat vain and affected for this column to include itself in the "bottleneck" of critics by which you believe "our Theater is strangled" at present. Having only succeeded, by virtue of vast overwork, enormous underpayment, ubiquitous silence, *and* a number of microbes, in occasionally strangling itself during the past three seasons, it will be obvious to anyone that this department's effect is thin. Nevertheless, I maintain its curiosity is still strong and it is precisely because I consider the fact both of your production and your advertisement as so curious, as well as interesting, that I believe you will regard this letter with equivalent generosity.

I think it will be fairer to set down my impression of the play at stake at once. The fourth in his series of World War II vehicles (not one of which I believe should have been produced), Mr. Anderson's present piece must be called panoramic. And by this I mean that its scene motivates more than half its lines and action, a device which is as familiar to movie-goers and novel-readers as to your own "Theatre Going Public." Set in "a diner on the ocean highway between Los Angeles and San Francisco" at the present time, the play employs thirty-one characters, a good many of whom are recurrent, some intermittent, some momentary; and the problems it fidgets are consequently as numerous: economic, sociological, pathological, ethical, moral. Mainly, it seems to be the moral question which concerns Mr. Anderson the most, and his motive is herewith respected. But while it may appear practically (not historically) useless to turn to a "poet" (your quote) for a solution to the illness of the world, it is neither impractical, I think, nor critically unreasonable to expect of an established playwright a fair resolution of the characters and theme he has projected. Mr. Anderson's theme, according to your advertisement, is "the state of our country today." But when his resolution of a girl who has aborted her illegitimate child upon learning of her husband's unexpected return from the war in Europe, only to return to him and to *his* illegitimate child upon hearing some lines quoted presumably from John Livingston Lowes's study of Coleridge and dealing with the durability as well as magic of the land of Xanadu; when a side-plot concerning a mentally-sick Pacific soldier resolves not only into expected murder but also into the conviction that the whole situation has been lifted from a novel recently promoted in the public prints ("The Brick Foxhole" by Richard Brooks); when the motivation for these and other incidents is not only arbitrary but unclear (witness the important character "Hern" in the piece); when the progression of these and other incidents is consistently and falsely interrupted by an alarming number of one-dimensional, stock-Anderson

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people; and when the whole is stitched into the renowned, syntactically obfuscating dialogue as hampering to the player as it is to the listener; when all this is plain, then I think the theatrically concerned must concede that the play is poor, and the wrighting not very good.

But your chief contention—that the unanimous disapproval of the reviews has prevented this play from the "chance to find its audience"—can only, I think, be answered with a question. And this is to ask you what audience you think Mr. Anderson earns, deserves, or wishes for this and his recent work. Having progressed from verse (with some honest theory attached) to reportage (with a round-the-war trip and General Eisenhower's approval for authenticity) he has surely conciously foregone the serious non-Theater Going Public of "Winterset" and the earlier historical plays. Nevertheless, it is truly (isn't it?) to this exact public that you direct your appeal when you stress your play's "faults," its lack of "the neatly packaged order of emptiness," its basis in "the expression of a dramatic poet." It seems to me in his descent from the *writing* of verse for the stage ("Winterset") to its long *quotation* ("Eve of Saint Mark") to its long *reading* ("Truckline Café") Mr. Anderson has mixed and lost not only any possible public but also himself. I have accused him before in this column of being over-produced, but I did not mean this unintelligently. In this age of the artist as a contracted man, it is almost impossible to trace motives, and it may indeed be legally compulsive for this author to build a play a year, stage it, publish it between boards, and grind on. But I do not think the resultant work has proved to be useful either to the theater as a whole, or to your assumed "real Theater lover." I think your image of our professional stage as a bottle with a narrow neck is a fair one, and if we quarrel about the cause of the cork, as we certainly do, this is still interesting, promotion in a roundabout way. But none of us is so stupid as not to agree that only new wine will break both the bottle's neck and the great old dirty bottle as well. If I am, from experience, dubious of Mr. Anderson's ability or desire to supply this commodity, I still do not understand why you could not have produced it. And advertised it. Sincerely yours,

KAPPO PHELAN.

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The Labor Movement

Quill and the Public Ride Again

THERE WAS a retired Irish cop who used to chant whenever the occasion seemed to demand it: "Don't cast your vote for Mad Mike Quill! He never worked and never will." There may be some who question Quill's sanity, but certainly no impartial observer could seriously question the fact that the Councilman—president of the Transport Workers Union, CIO—recently put in a few days and nights of strenuous labor in his unsuccessful attempt to bluff Mayor O'Dwyer and New York City for the second time running.

The first time was on the question of the proposed sale of city-owned transit powerhouses to the Consolidated Edison Company. Quill and the TWU, and the Communist Party which controls both of them, very sensibly opposed this unhappy idea. But very irresponsibly, very recklessly, very stupidly, they also threatened to strike the transit lines unless the city submitted the powerhouse plan to a popular referendum. In short, a paralyzing strike for a minor political objective.

As a matter of fact, even more alarming to Brother Quill and the Party was the danger of losing their strong TWU membership in the strategic powerhouses to the Utility Workers Union, a right-wing CIO outfit that enjoys a closed shop in the Edison system. In any case, Mayor O'Dwyer agreed to the referendum, which was all right, but he singularly failed to rebuke Quill for his strike threat or to point out that he was not agreeing to the referendum because of the threat.

Since then the Mayor has apologized for this lapse, explaining it on the ground that he had "just got his feet under the table" and wasn't prepared for a major strike.

The second time O'Dwyer was ready for Master Michael. On this occasion the TWU demands were a $2.00 a day raise and "sole collective bargaining rights." Quill claimed that his union had 20,000 dues-paying members out of 32,000 on the city system, a slight exaggeration if ever there was one. The Mayor replied that a raise was in order and that something would have to be done to find money enough to pay it, but as for "sole bargaining rights," well, the New York State law simply did not allow it, and if Mr. Quill wanted to strike, he would have to go ahead and strike and we would see who would win, Mike Quill or the City of New York.

So Mike and the Party bosses apparently decided that

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they didn't want to strike after all. It is true that Phil Murray, the sensible right-winger who heads the CIO, was brought into the situation and he undoubtedly used his influence to prevent a stoppage. But those who know report that the CP's are lately much less willing to take orders from Murray than they have been in the past. So it is far more likely that they just plain figured that the chances of their winning were not at all good. The sum total was that a special five-man committee was set up to review all the issues involving transit labor, the TWU called off the strike and withdrew its demand for exclusive bargaining rights. And Quill of course claimed a victory.

In the sense that Mike emerged from the affair without having been thrown off the City Council, thrown into jail or thrown into the East River, it doubtless was a victory. It is hard to see how it was in any other sense. Particularly when you consider the fact that his friendship with O'Dwyer seems to have come to a bruised and bitter end, and not by his own choice. Mike was notably absent from the all-night conferences attended by the Mayor at the office and home of David Sarnoff, RCA president and mystery man of the proceedings. The first blow came when the Mayor kept Mike waiting for half-an-hour outside his office (and him a Councilman) while he wrapped up the agreement with Sarnoff and Murray.

Other than wages the most important question to be answered by the special committee is the matter of union recognition. In particular, what are they going to say about Corporation Council Bennett's opinion that to recognize any union as sole bargaining agent is "in clear violation of law" because "nowhere in the law of this State" is the city given the explicit power to do so? Isn't that a slightly peculiar principle of law? Is government helpless to take any action not duly authorized in black and white?

Quill or no Quill, communists or no communists, Mr. Bennett, let's be reasonable. And let's remember too that until a few days ago, when somebody opened a manhole by mistake and looked in, the Department of Sanitation had for years been giving exclusive bargaining rights to the AFL. And let's give a thought too to the union contracts signed by the cities of Philadelphia, Detroit, Seattle and San Francisco, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States Government itself.

Quill has been talking as though the committee will recommend an election. If so, will he win as easily as he pretends to think? At the present moment there is certainly no one who could beat him, though there are a number of organizations on the lines—AFL federal union (5,000), Civil Service Forum (8,000), Brotherhoods of Locomotive Engineers (3,000) and Railroad Signalmen (2,000)—that might keep him out of a majority. (Figures given are claimed and should probably be divided by at least 3, as should also Mike's claim of 20,000).

The only man who could challenge Quill and his fellow-comrades successfully is John L. Lewis with his catch-all District 50. Actually the inside story is that Lewis was just as surprised as anyone else to see himself on the front page of the *Times* spearheading a drive to knock the TWU out of the New York subways.

But Lewis likes a fight and he loves a dramatic, starring rôle. He might be sold. With all his faults, which are many and pronounced, he would certainly be an improvement over "Mad Mike Quill." There is no one else available who has a record of energy and success to

She Is a Poet . . :

"Miss Houselander brings something new and quite exciting, if I may put it that way, to religious poetry . . . And she is a poet. This is a living and human book. Read it for yourself, even if you are an infidel and you will be nourished by it." So wrote William Rose Benet of THE FLOWERING TREE ($2.00) by Caryll Houselander, and *America* was no less enthusiastic: "She is to be congratulated on her luminous presentation of some of the great truths. She has realized them with rare insight and has worked out a melodious and extremely malleable system of 'rhythms' to express them." It isn't so very often that Catholic and secular press agree so heartily about so very Catholic a poet. . . . In THE REED OF GOD ($2.00), her earlier book (on Our Lady), she showed her quality as a poet in another way: "Almost the whole book is one enchanting prose-poem on the life of Our Lady . . . Here is writing and spiritual awareness such as are rarely encountered in combination."—*Orate Fratres.* "The effect of the book is sacramental. It effects what it signifies. You will not only read it, you will pray it."—*Catholic World.* She is a poet, we repeat. It hardly seems fair that she should be an artist too, but she thought of herself as one long before she began to write. Her illustrations to Joan Windham's latest book NEW SIX O'CLOCK SAINTS ($1.75) are not only charming, but fit the text to perfection in just the way small children demand. We recommend the book as wholesome spiritual candy for Lent, for any children heroically going without the other sort.

If older children want a book for Lent we suggest OUR LADY'S FEASTS ($1.50) by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy. (The Annunciation is not far away.) The author has illustrated this book with the same kind of enchanting silhouettes that made MARY, MY MOTHER ($1.00) so fascinating.

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match Mike and the Transport division of the Communist Party. About 85 per cent of the subway workers are Catholics, but it is unfortunately true that in the last analysis most of them are not swayed by considerations of politics or ideology. Like too many of their fellow-Americans they ask themselves only, "What can he do for me?" The Party has done something for them. So did Lewis when as CIO president he negotiated some of their best contracts. It would be an interesting fight.

JOHN C. CORT.

Books of the Week

Nicodemus. Dorothy Walworth. Houghton. $2.50.

IN A DAY when optimistic belief in continual human progress has been shaken to its foundations much soul-searching is to be expected. Is there anything for the bewildered human spirit to anchor to? Perhaps religion has the answers, after all.

Such is the quest of the leading characters in "Nicodemus." One is the minister of a fashionable New York church; another an actor who has passed his prime and is infatuated with his beautiful, soulless young wife; a working girl, with the boy she plans to marry fighting in the Pacific; a middle-aged matron dissatisfied with everything. The minister loses his faith and tries to regain it among the poor in his church's downtown mission. The actor tries for a while to live the minister part he plays in a new Broadway production. The girl accepts baptism and starts serving with a ladies' aid Red Cross outfit only to be notified that her beloved Jake has been killed in action. The matron concentrates on a certain feeling of otherness that convinces her of God's existence.

Mrs. Walworth does several things rather well. She has a real feel for the agnostic atmosphere of a present-day American metropolis. Her observations on human existence are often strikingly penetrating and psychologically sound. Her story creaks at times but she has succeeded in making a specifically religious novel—one which is at the same time highly readable. She has posed the problem both feelingly and convincingly. It is too bad that her solution is fuzzy and unsatisfying. To people obsessed with the desire to know the meaning of existence neither a vague sense of otherness nor an emotional surge in a burning tenement or at Christmas midnight service is an answer. Faith is a gift, but without historical or rational content it has little vital meaning for a man or woman who is ardently seeking the way and the truth.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

Miss Bunting. Angela Thirkell. Knopf. $2.50.

MISS THIRKELL has out-thirkelled herself in this sketch of an old Barsetshire governess and her last pupil. Like a rationed butter-pat, the story has been stretched by the commonplaces of everyday life in Hallbury to cover, but oh so thinly, the area prescribed by the publisher. Readers, who have lately revisited Brideshead, must also be warned that not only substance but social status drops sharply. Indeed, Miss Bunting shares this feeling of steep descent with her public. Miss Bunting was accustomed herself to the great country houses and the best of the county families; the peerage had enjoyed her prudent and extremely intelligent guidance, and the tutelage of a Baronet's daughter in a little town without even a Bishop brought Miss Bunting into her first contact

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for many years with the relentless snobbery of the "sub" middle classes, or, in other words, the uppercrust of Hallbury. Her own seventy years of impeccable social relationships, however, surrounded her with a halo of dignity and she knew the job she had done was a good one—fertilizing with the richness of literature the fallow mind of a sixteen-year-old-girl and transforming a sickly, nervous child into a pleasing young lady. But according to American standards, Anne Fielding is, at the best, extraordinarily immature. When it comes to Anne's remarking that the perfume, bath salts and toilet water given her by the daughter of the self-made industrialist, "smell horrid," it would seem that snobbishness can even contaminate the dressing-table.

Miss Thirkell is rather proud of this ultra refinement in Anne and displays some spleen over refugees such as the "Mixo-Lydian" cook whom Miss Bunting promptly puts in her place, explaining to Lady Fielding that she had learned in a Grand Duke's household how to treat Slavic inferiors.

"But her Father is a university professor," protested Lady Fielding.

"No well-born Mixo-Lydian would dream of being connected with a university," replied Miss Bunting. "The young woman, who is probably listening now outside the door is an inferior. Until the war the Mixo-Lydians kept up the habits of a real aristocracy—to hunt and get drunk all autumn, to visit the Riviera and get drunk in the spring and summer and to invite ballet girls to their palaces and get drunk all winter." From that moment on, Gradko addressed Miss Bunting as "Princess," and even Miss Bunting acknowledged that, as a *cook*, she was superior.

E. V. R. WYATT.

Yankee Stonecutters. Albert Teneyck Gardner. Columbia. $4.00.

READERS of the "Marble Faun" will remember that part of the action in that glimmering old romance occurred in the studio of an American sculptor living at Rome. Hawthorne did not even have to imagine this lunar figure, as by 1858 a bustling colony of our clay-shapers had already been ensconsed throughout the Italian peninsula. First of these to arrive had been Thomas Crawford, in the early 30's, and the last of importance to persist in residing there was William Wetmore Story, who died in 1895. The span between furnishes the personalities who garnish this lively study by a Research Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Perhaps Mr. Gardner is too infatuated with his title. It implies graveyard hewers rather than sculptors. To be sure, as he points out, many of these early men did embellish tombstones with drooping willows and testamental doves. But once they got to Italy our aspiring Michelangelos entrusted to workmen the hewing out of what they shaped in clay. Perhaps this accounted for the glossiness of many a figure. Nevertheless, these Yankee "cutters" did not lack in commissions. Thomas Crawford produced the "Armed Freedom," which mercifully perches far out of sight on the Capitol dome. Hiram Powers did the gracile "Greek Slave" that many a lover of liberty purchased. William Wetmore Story, a pet of Henry James and subject of his two-volume encomium-*without-commitment, received $40,000* for his figure of Chief Justice Marshall. As for Erastus Dow Palmer, an Albany mechanic who remained such in his sculpture,

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Next Week

THE ATOM AT NUERNBERG. Percy Winner, whose article, "A Sense of Shared Guilt," we published last summer — an article which attracted much attention and which is to appear in French in a forthcoming issue of *Esprit*—has written a profound analysis of the relation between man's safety and man's salvation. He is particularly concerned with the judicial aspect of the Nuernberg trials, and he remarks, "We are the richest, the strongest, the safest people and we feel neither safe nor comfortable. We are the most peacefully intentioned people and we are not at peace in ourselves."

NOT ENOUGH DIVERSITY is a discussion by Harry Lorin Binsse of the present situation in our American channels of communication—press, radio and movies—provoked by the publication of "The First Freedom" by Morris Ernst, in which a full light is for the first time played upon the bottlenecks which impede the progress of opinion to the market place.

SYSTEMATIC POLITICS. James MacGregor Byrne reviews in detail and at length a recent book on the all-absorbing subject of politics by Professor Charles E. Merriam of the University of Chicago.

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he never got to Europe—and his sculpture looked it. William Rimmer alone, for his anatomy in such bronzes as the "Dying Centaur" and "Falling Gladiator," had the authority of something commendable in his medium. And he perished almost neglected.

This book lightly, but not imperceptibly, records such performances and those others which complete the period. It is well documented, succinct and competently organized. As befits the period, it attempts no praise of the accomplishment. But it does restore to us the men who furnished many a gleaming page for Hawthorne's memento to his Italian days. JEROME MELLQUIST.

Who's Who in Latin America. Edited by Ronald Hilton. Stanford. $2.50.

THIS volume of one hundred and thirty pages is Part I of seven covering all the American republics south of the Rio Grande, and begins with Mexico. Its third edition is the product of Stanford University and the A. N. Marquis Company, publishers of "Who's Who in America." Together, they speak with authority on such a subject. It has grown out of the late Percy Alvin Martin's (Stanford University) biographical dictionary of notable living men and women of Latin America, which he founded in 1935, as a necessary adjunct to his studies in the history of international cultural relations in the areas during the modern era. Dr. Martin's scholarship was inspired by a true love of both the old Iberian world and its expansion to America and his seeking to harmonize them in their more recent explosive manifestations, avoiding the almost inevitable stirring up of animosities.

Dr. Ronald Hilton, the present editor, is associate professor of Romanic languages at this same university and corresponding member of the Hispanic Society of America. He too is firm in his "attempts to understand the present day developments of society in those countries which are commonly grouped together under the appellation of 'Latin America.'" To him, people are interesting as persons and individuals rather than as great historical names or names merely adroitly publicized. To him, great names do not remain great except by current and known achievement. That is, after all, a valid interpretation of true aristocracy. An historic name ceases to remain great without revitalization in each generation of its bearers, and proof that they remain the living forces that make them great in the world. To form such a list in modern revolutionary societies is a far more difficult task than that of A. N. Marquis Company's normal publishing of "Who's Who in America." There is no evidence of partisanship in the listing of Mexican names, which is an achievement in itself, for forty years of revolution and bitter social war could hardly expect to escape its repercussions. This is a very valuable beginning to the harmonization of a new era of Latin American history.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

CONTRIBUTORS

Katherine LOUGHLIN is herself a Bostonian.
Christopher MORLEY'S second poem is inspired by a lyric of Sir Edward Dyer's.
Rev. L. de CONINCK, S.J., has taught pastoral theology at the University of Louvain; this article is condensed from one originally appearing in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* for September-October, 1945.
E. V. R. WYATT is the drama critic of the *Catholic World*.
Jerome MELLQUIST is a New York art critic and author.
William Franklin SANDS is the author of "Our Jungle Diplomacy."

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